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Christianity a Universal Religion.

"The field is the world."— *Jesus Christ.*

The founders of ancient religious systems were contented if they could procure the allegiance of single nations, and seem to have considered their systems strictly national, — not as fitted for universal adoption. Jesus Christ first developed the noble plan of a universal religion. And we cannot but regard it as one of the strongest proofs of the divinity of his mission, that, while this grand conception appears never to have entered the mind of any ancient philosopher, statesman, or priest, it should have inspired the soul and directed the unremitted labours of a poor and illiterate peasant in an obscure and unenlightened corner of Asia. This idea of uniting all men as to their highest and most permanent interests, too vast, too majestically simple for the human mind, we are irresistibly led to attribute to divine wisdom. God, through Christ, has promulgated a system of religion which he designs for men of all nations and ages, and which, we think, must on examination commend itself as perfectly adapted to its purpose, — and not only so, but as the only known religion which is fitted to become universal. We propose to point out some of those characteristics of Christianity which adapt it for universality, and which authorize the hope that it will one day subject all the kingdoms of the world to the Redeemer's sceptre.

I. The first characteristic of Christianity which we shall mention is its adaptation to human nature.

The founders of other religions have proceeded upon the presumption that all is not right in human nature, — that

all man's innate appetites and propensities are not equally innocent, — that not only his own evil creations, but a great part of his Creator's work is to be undone. Thus, some systems have required the mortification of the flesh, by renouncing the gratification of those appetites which were implanted for the preservation of our being; others, the surrender of domestic and social pleasures in themselves innocent and even virtuous; others, the confinement and degradation of that mind to which God has assigned no field narrower than immensity, no limit short of his own eternity. Now Christianity attempts no such change. It takes human nature as it came from the hands of the Creator, and recognises all its appetites, instincts, propensities, and powers as good in themselves and adapted to the production of good. It aims not to defeat, but to promote, the healthful developement of every principle of our nature. It establishes an equilibrium and a mutual subordination among all its constituent portions. It does for it the same service that is performed for the vegetable world by the united influence of the earth, the sun, and the shower, which do not pervert, but aid and complete, the designs of nature.

Man is an animal being. He has appetites and functions which fit him for a residence in the material world and the enjoyment of material pleasures. Christ does not require the reckless renunciation of these pleasures, and of their medium, the body. He barely enjoins temperance, which is, in fact, the dictate, the demand, of nature. For without it health cannot be preserved; without it the zest of novelty must soon be lost; without it a temporary cessation of sensual enjoyment is misery. And Christ has farther shown himself the friend of human nature by assigning to the body, with its appetites, functions, and pleasures, its appropriate rank and sphere of usefulness. He has taught us that the body is the appointed means of spiritual discipline and improvement, inferior to the mind in dignity, subject to its control, unessential to its existence or its happiness. He thus attaches to it that relative value which will prompt his disciples to seek its gratifications without inordinate anxiety, to enjoy them temperately, and to forego or resign them cheerfully. He thus makes it subservient to the developement and cultivation of man's intellectual and moral powers, and therefore the means of attaining more dignified and purer enjoyments than those of which a merely sentient being is susceptible. Thus is Christianity perfectly adapted to man's animal nature.

Again, man is a social being. He is born a member of society, with numerous social connexions and interests. He is endowed with social affections and sympathies. Christ does not demand the abandonment of society, the dissolution of those bonds which connect us with our brethren, and a monastic seclusion from those whose friendship makes our joy. He, on the other hand, aids the designs of nature, by multiplying common interests, by cutting off the sources of jealousy and alienation, and subjecting social intercourse to the comprehensive law of universal love. He bids us regard each other, not as cotenants of the earth, but as coheirs of heaven, — not as fellow-travellers for a few days, but as companions for eternity, — not as strangers casually connected, but as children of the same Father. He shows us that those distinctions of rank and fortune, which are so apt to alienate men from each other, are not and from their nature cannot be essential; that, with respect to their far-reaching and all-important relations with God and eternity, the king and his meanest subject, the proprietor of millions and the beggar at his gate, are on the same level. He spreads over those sins, which are so apt to alienate us from our brethren, the mantle of charity. He establishes self-love as the measure of brotherly love. And, finally, he forbids us to look to death as the termination of our social relations; but gives us reason to hope that those friendships which Christian love here cements, will be formed anew and cherished forever in the light of God's countenance. Now it is undeniable that the interruption of our social connexions, while our social sympathies and wants remain, is one of the most fruitful sources of human misery; and that our nature demands some bond of union over which space, time, sin, and death can have no power. This bond we have seen that Christianity supplies, and it is therefore adapted to man as a social being.

Further, man is an intellectual being. He has powers which qualify him for the acquisition of knowledge and the investigation of truth. Christ does not repress the efforts of mental power, and chain the mind down to a few beggarly elements of knowledge or to an implicit faith in a few unintelligible propositions. He, on the other hand, supplies the wants of the mind. By making the body subservient to it, he removes the chief obstacles to its improvement, and furnishes it with an active and effective instrument for the acquisition of knowledge and strength. He regulates those

violent passions which disturb the equilibrium of the intellect, and thus render it incapable of systematic or permanent effort. He concentrates all the energies of the soul on the noblest, the most fruitful, the most interesting objects. He presents the great truths which relate to the spirit, to God, and to eternity, as the subjects of contemplation and investigation; and (as the mind cannot but partake in some degree of the attributes of its usual topics of thought,) he forms it to an ever-increasing resemblance to its divine Source and Prototype. Where do we behold greater mental power or higher mental elevation than in St. Paul? But we have no reason to suppose his intellectual endowments thus pre-eminent, when he was a zealous persecutor of the church of Christ. He gives us the secret of his greatness, when he says, "This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "*This one thing I do.*" It was this concentration of purpose and effort for a noble and worthy object that added strength and vigour to his mind. And since his day, who have displayed the greatest mental power? Has it not been Christian patriots, philanthropists, and martyrs? And why has it been so? Simply because, whatever they have done, they have had constantly before them one prime object of pursuit, to which they have immediately or indirectly consecrated all their powers and efforts, — because they have had the noblest themes of contemplation, the highest sphere of duty, the strongest motives to vigorous and persevering exertion. And if Christianity thus developes, concentrates, and perfects the powers of the mind, it is surely adapted to man as an intellectual being.

Finally, man is a moral being. He is capable of choosing for himself a standard of action, and of regulating his conduct by it. Christ does not confound moral distinctions, and content himself with requiring mental assent to his doctrines or the mechanical performance of unmeaning ceremonies. He establishes a safe and immutable standard of action, that is, the will of God as made known by nature, Providence, and revelation. This is a test by which we have the means of trying every moral quality, habit, and action. For God has not left himself without a witness in nature; the course of his Providence distinctly shows what modes of conduct meet his approbation, and what, his displeasure; and the commands and prohibitions of his revealed word extend to every department

of human life. Christ has also sanctioned this standard of action, by showing that adherence to it is the means of obtaining true, permanent, eternal happiness, while he who departs from it sins against his nature, his happiness, his soul. And, above all, he has given the heart-stricken penitent the hope of pardon and acceptance from a Father who receives from his frail children contrition and sincerity in lieu of perfect obedience. Now what man, in a moral point of view, most needed was a perfect, immutable, universal standard of action, such moral sanctions as should make virtue every man's highest interest, and the hope of pardon for past offences upon repentance and reformation. And Christianity, by supplying this standard, these sanctions, this blessed hope, evinces its adaptation to man's moral nature.

Thus have we seen that Christianity is alike adapted to man's nature and wants as a sensual, social, intellectual, and moral being. But human nature is one and the same everywhere; it everywhere exhibits the same frailties and feels the same wants. And therefore Christianity, so far as regards its adaptation to that nature, and its power of remedying those frailties and supplying those wants, is fitted to become a universal religion.

But in an inquiry of this kind, we should consider the circumstances in which man is placed as well as his abstract nature. And this leads us to remark,

II. Secondly, that Christianity is fitted to become a universal religion, because it is adapted to all the varieties of external situation in which man can be placed.

The fanciful systems of Greek and Roman mythology could be embraced only by a nation of painters, sculptors, and architects. The loathsome objects of Egyptian reverence none but a resident of Egypt could worship. The Hindoo must live near enough to the Ganges to wash in its purifying stream, or he lives and dies in his sins. The worshipper of the god who requires the slaughter of flocks and herds can live only in a pastoral region; nor could a tribe of Nomades embrace a religion which demands the presentation of first-fruits or frequent libations of wine and oil. The Jewish religion commanded all its professors to appear at the temple in Jerusalem three times a year, and to maintain perpetually the daily, weekly, and annual sacrifices; and now that Jerusalem is deserted, that the temple is level with the ground, that the daily oblation has ceased, there is not a man living who, as to religion, has a right to call himself a Jew. Nor have the votaries

of these several systems ever professed to regard them as of universal design or adaptation. They have not even attributed anything like a universal supremacy to their gods. The Egyptian would not have ascribed a civil war in Italy to his pet crocodile, nor would the Roman have supposed Jupiter much concerned in a change of dynasty on the throne of the Ptolemies. The Hindoo owns Juggernaut as his country's and his own god; but thinks that a more powerful deity, even his tutelar divinity, gave to the Englishman his Indian conquests. It is doubtful whether even the ancient Jews believed their God Jehovah the only God, or whether they did not rather regard him as the greatest of gods.

But Christ revealed a God who protects and governs, not this or that nation, but all men, — a God of impartial, universal benevolence, — a God, who is everywhere present, and to whom acceptable worship may rise from every portion of the world. The simple rites which the gospel enjoins demand no peculiar soil or climate or state of society. Wherever there is a well, fountain, or river, there may the infant or the convert be initiated into the church of Christ. Wherever fellow-disciples can meet for a social repast, there may the Saviour's dying love be commemorated. Christianity enjoins no expensive or burdensome offering. The sympathizing heart and, where it can be extended, the liberal hand are its only acceptable oblations. It demands no pilgrimages, no pompous assemblies or solitary fasts. Wherever the Christian is, his God is with him, around him, within him. And whether by day or night, in the closet or the market-place, in silence or amid confusion, whenever and wherever he would offer praise or prayer, the supreme Object of praise, the Hearer of prayer will accept and answer. The gospel imposes no fatiguing and unprofitable round of ceremonies. Every man, who is industrious and faithful in his avocation, honest in his dealings, pure in his conversation, lives in the constant observance of the Christian ritual. It enjoins obedience to no difficult and complex code of laws. Its great law of love, love to God and man, all can understand, all can keep, all must keep if they would be happy. Its privileges, too, may be enjoyed by all of every nation, in every place. The divine protection is extended over all. The sun of God's favour may enlighten every mind. The influences of his spirit may pervade and sanctify every soul. The love of Jesus may be shed abroad in every heart. And wherever the Christian dies, whether on sea or on land, whether beneath

the torrid rays of the tropical sun or on the ice-bound shore of the Arctic ocean, whether in the bosom of his family or among strangers, Christ, the resurrection and the life, is waiting to receive him to heaven. In fine, the rites of Christianity may be observed, its duties discharged, and its privileges enjoyed, wherever be the home, the sojourn, or the death-bed of the believer. And this characteristic of our religion, as we have already observed, is one of those circumstances which eminently fit it to become a universal religion.

There is another important view of this subject, which must be reserved for the next number.

A. P. Peabody.

Letters from the South. No. II.

Baltimore, *Jan.* 1*st*, 1834.

Since writing to you from New York, I have extended my tour to Washington, whence I have just returned to this city. My visit to the capital, as you may suppose, was not uninteresting. I heard enough of political talk, and, above the monotonous buzz of a thousand voices, the great deposite-question was continually sounding in my ears. But as I was one of those "lookers-on in Venice," whose scanty knowledge enables them to see only the surface of things, I shall not trouble you with any crude and idle remarks on matters which *the initiated* in political science are alone at liberty to expound.

It has been my first object to discover the prospects of Unitarianism in the section of country through which I have passed. On comparing the accounts which I have received from various sources, I am compelled to say that its prospects are small — I mean regularly organized Unitarianism, as it exists at the north. Mr. Furness's congregation at Philadelphia is large — the church is full. But then the society is composed almost wholly of New-Englanders and Englishmen, who were Unitarians previously. No converts, I believe, have been made from the home-population of the city, except

a few from the liberal among the Friends. Mr. Burnap's society in this city is most respectable in its character and considerable as to its numbers, and grows slowly ;, but then it is principally composed of emigrants from the north. Mr. Palfrey's in Washington is a good society, but not large ; and, like Mr. Furness's, is composed of New-Englanders and Englishmen. The great barrier to the reception of Unitarianism, all along, is the extreme bigotry, prejudice, and ignorance everywhere built up against it. I was prepared to find a good deal of this, but not so much as I have lately heard of. I could tell you some anecdotes to the point, which would surprise some of our friends at home, though they would not wear a strange aspect to yourself. But I shall avoid what might, perhaps, be called gossip. The great object (and it is a very difficult one to accomplish,) is to bring people within the sphere of your influence, that you may tell them what Unitarianism is ; then you may do well enough. But what can you expect, when thousands of intelligent people are filled with notions of our views of Christianity, so utterly unlike the reality and so ludicrous, that you can hardly believe them to be serious when they tell them to you, and so prejudiced that a lover of music would think it quite unsafe to attend an oratorio in a Unitarian church on an evening at a reasonable distance from the Sabbath, and when the influence of an ignorant and bigoted clergy — ignorant as regards our faith — is so great? Were you to go among the Orthodox of this community, perhaps five out of every ten persons you might meet would be surprised and shocked to learn that we even profess to draw our faith from the Bible. Their only notions about us are that we are a sort of monsters, who do not believe in Jesus Christ. — A very intelligent layman, who has at heart the prosperity of the great cause of truth and righteousness, said to me to-day, " Little or nothing can be accomplished towards converting the indigenous population of the south, unless you bring the strongest minds, which perforce shall bear down all opposition ; or else, preachers of a fervid eloquence, suited to the taste of the people. The cool, unimpassioned style and manner of the north will not do. It might do, perhaps, if you had people already before you. As it is, the great object is to bring them within your influence." This can be done only by a striking style, which, to use an old phrase, not, however, just what I want, " will make a noise." — Besides the causes I have mentioned, and another great one, the want of a spirit of free inquiry, I should not omit to mention fashion, which, especially as regards the young, often stands in the way of good influences.

These remarks refer to the prospects of Unitarianism as such, I mean with its *name*. But as to the doctrine of the simple unity of God, its reception is by no means so limited. There is, for instance, the large and flourishing body of the Hicksite Quakers, most of whom are to be found in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. In this city they are numerous. Then, there are the Christians and some among the smaller denominations. It is doubtful, also, whether among the Methodists the truth has not found its way to a considerable extent. I have been told that many of that sect in Baltimore are Arians. Dr. Duncan, of this city, pastor of an Independent (formerly Presbyterian) church, who is allowed on all hands to be a strong man, has written vehemently and forcibly against creeds, for which he has been denounced by many of his brethren and expelled from the presbytery. He has advocated principles for which Unitarians have long been contending, and I judge that he has come far within the pale of heresy. It is a common remark here that he is "a Unitarian in a mist." It is understood that he has given up the doctrine of the third *person* in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, and believes only in a duality of persons in the Godhead. I may mention that it is confidently asserted of a certain Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, that its pastor and a large part of the congregation are Unitarians, and, considering the sources of my information, I am inclined to believe that there is some truth in it. It is unquestionable that there exists south of New England a great deal of Unitarianism, though it has not put on the name. The name is the great bugbear. It is supposed to cover the concentration of all that is daring and wilful in skepticism and infidelity. It deserves to be remarked, however, that Unitarian preaching has altered, in some degree, the tone of sentiment and feeling in regard to us, especially at Washington. The Orthodox clergy do not speak with quite so much ignorant dogmatism as formerly, and are beginning to learn that they must meet us with argument, and argument alone.

I heard an able lecture from Mr. Palfrey, at his Sunday-evening service last week, on the duty and methods of free inquiry. He had a very large auditory. The sermon which I heard was introductory to a course of lectures on Unitarianism, which will be advertised in the public papers, and from which much is expected. Through a letter received from Washington to-day by a friend, I learn that the lecture of last Sab-

bath, on the person of Christ, was more numerously attended than the former, and presented a convincing argument. It has never before been the society's practice to advertise lectures of this sort, and much good may come of it.

Among my recollections I must not forget to mention my visit, last week, to the Jesuits' College at Georgetown, D. C. We were received with great courtesy by Father Mulledy, the rector, who devoted the afternoon to us. I came away much gratified with what I saw and with the attention we received, and regretted that I should not be able to repeat my visit. The college is situated on the heights of Georgetown, in one of the finest positions I know. To the east and north, the ground — part of which is laid out in a garden, and on which are several neat, white edifices belonging to the college — sweeps up with fine undulations, which reminded me strongly of Mount Auburn. At the west is a beautiful view of the valley of the Potomac and a part of Washington. There are, I believe, at the college, seventeen brethren of the order who have offices of instruction and government. Many of them have been educated in the first universities of Europe. Father Mulledy is an accomplished gentleman, and has the reputation of a learned man. The number of students, most of whom are Protestants, is about one hundred and forty; it is sometimes larger. The course of instruction goes over seven years. I have heard the objection made that it is somewhat too scholastic, and not sufficiently American. Great attention is paid to the study of the classics and especially to composing and conversing in Latin. The lectures on metaphysics, logic, theology, *etc.*, are delivered in that language. To those who have advanced to this part of the course this presents no embarrassment, it is said, as they are then generally able to speak Latin with facility. Yet it struck me as a useless relic of the old mode of instruction; and I cannot but believe that it must make most subjects, especially metaphysics and theology, sufficiently dry and uninteresting to the student. At least, lectures in Latin cannot have that vigour and life, nor that delicacy of adaptation, which lectures delivered to pupils in their own language would exhibit. The library-room is a small but very elegant apartment, and contains about twelve thousand volumes, among which are some very rare and valuable books; and I saw some illuminated manuscripts, one of which is very splendid. I observed many modern works; among them, books con-

nected with the history of our country and the biography of our distinguished men; and, if I remember rightly, there were also some heretical works on theology, which circumstance may take off the edge of that distrust which many of our good brethren may have towards a Catholic institution. After visiting the library we went into the chapel, the aspect of which is very pleasant. It is just finished. There is a painting in fresco over the altar, and several pictures in frames at the sides, one of which, a copy from the *Night* of Correggio, I thought had some depth and power. — The weather had been heavy and dismal all day; but, as we departed, a gleam of sunshine came out on the river and the little island and valley below and the edifices beyond, which was a peaceful accompaniment to the courtesy we had received, and would have been strangely discordant with any sectarian animosities, if, at such a moment, we had been disposed to cherish any. But I was not so disposed, and I can answer for my friend.

By the kindness of Mr. Mulledy we had a note to Sister Stanislaus, whom I suppose we may call the Lady Abbess, of the Convent of the Visitation, which is at a short distance from the college. Sister Stanislaus showed us all the interior of the nunnery, from the dormitories to the refectory and the kitchen. There was an exquisite neatness about all the apartments, though there were no pretensions to elegance, which affected us very pleasantly; and certainly there was no need of the apology she made, that things were not in such good order as usual, as the Christmas holidays had commenced and many of the pupils were preparing to go home. We went from the refectory into the *Odeon* (from a Greek word signifying a song), a beautiful little room. Two young ladies, whom we found there, sang to us, accompanied by the harp, the Hymn to the Virgin, from *The Forest Sanctuary*, and some other pieces. — "This," said Sister Stanislaus, as she opened the door of a little oratory, "is an image of the blessed Virgin, whom I hope you do not suppose we worship, as many do." She looked upon that image, she told us, as she would upon the miniature of a dear friend, and she thought we could not refuse to admit that the mother of our Saviour was entitled to that degree of reverence. She went on to tell us that she was once a Protestant, (she is a daughter of Com. Jones); that the forms of the Catholic worship, as aids to devotion, had always much affected her before she took the veil, and that their impressions had continually deepened. From what she told us we inferred that she, at least, was

very far from being an idolater, and that she regarded the ceremonies, emblems, and images of her worship only as helps to devotion. She is said to be a very accomplished woman; and there is a sweetness and gentleness in her tone and manner which cannot be mistaken. The pupils love her much. We may think, perhaps, that she ought to move in a different sphere, yet none but a bigot will deny that she is doing good where she is; and as she cannot be a solitary example, it may be well for the ignorant to inquire whether Catholicism presents no other aspect than one which is full of dark and foul spots. I am no apologist for the Catholics. No denomination is so widely separated from them as ours. But our charity will not injure us. — Connected with the nunnery is a school for young ladies, in which seven of the sisters are instructresses. The greater part of the pupils are Protestants. The instances of conversion, I believe, have been solitary. The character of the school is very high.

This morning I went into a hall in South street to hear Mr. Campbell, the western Baptist, who, you know, has given his name to a sect. He has delivered several lectures in this city, on the nature and design of Christianity. His head is strongly marked, and he has a fine eye. In his manner there was nothing remarkable. It had not so much vigour and energy as I expected to see, though it was not very deficient in these respects. In reading his selections from the Scriptures, I observed that he sometimes rendered words differently from the Common Version, and frequently threw in explanatory phrases. From his manner of doing it, I thought it must be his usual practice. He is evidently an acute, strong-minded man. There were no outbursts of eloquence, and, except now and then a strong metaphor, no imagery. But everything was forcibly put, and, generally, concisely stated. His subject was *Faith*, which he illustrated from that noble passage in Hebrews which sets before us so many examples of its power. On this subject he is said to be great. Among other things he said were these: — "Faith is belief in human testimony. To believe on the evidence of testimony is an element in our nature. It is the source of ninety-nine one hundredths of all the available knowledge we have. — No man can object to the doctrine of a future life because it rests on testimony. The very existence of the *present* life depends on it; were it not for this, the child would eat poison. — Faith does not come by experience and education. You can not *teach* a child

faith. It is just as natural to believe as it is to breathe. We *can* teach *disbelief.* We do teach unbelief to our children, every day of our lives. Let a child grow up to manhood without ever having heard a falsehood, and he would then be astonished at one, it would be infinitely strange to him. — There are three sources of knowledge: the senses; reasoning, which makes opinion; and testimony, from which faith flows. (He left out mathematical truth, certainty.) — There are not different degrees of faith. You cannot believe anything until you are *assured* of its truth. But you cannot be more nor less *assured* of the truth of anything. There may be different degrees of probability that it *may be* true, but you cannot believe that it *is* true till you are *assured* of its truth. Nor are there different manners of faith, different ways of believing. The difference we observe in this respect does not result from any different exercise of faith, but from the different objects on which it is exercised. So it is with the emotions and feelings which flow from the use of the other faculties of our nature, the difference is in the objects themselves. — Faith has an amazing power. What are we required to believe? That God is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Men do not believe this. They have no strength of conviction. — You cannot pray for faith, as many do, as a *prelude* to the exercise of faith. The prayer would presuppose faith, and faith depends on testimony. — The New Testament contains no naked system of theology. You find no abstract definitions there. Truth is exhibited full of life, clothed in all her habiliments. — Society is sleeping on the verge of an earthquake. The infidelity and atheism abroad and the sectarianism among Christians indicate that there will be a tremendous revolution soon."

I have given you a few of his thoughts and sayings, not, however, in his method. The lecture was extemporary, and had too many interludes and digressions. After he had left the main subject he commenced a long exhortation, the burden of which was, that there could be no possible reason why every individual who heard him should not immediately submit himself to the authority of Christ; and then he told us that if there was a person there who had never done this, an opportunity would now be given him, and immediately read a hymn. Before the last word had issued from his mouth, a pair of stentorian lungs set up the loudest and hardest notes I ever heard, and the contagion ran through the auditory. The hymn passed on, but without any effect. No one came for-

ward. Then he gave us another exhortation. But he made nothing of this. He was evidently out of the element in which his mind should act. Finally, he concluded by saying, "We will defer this matter till the evening." — The auditory was small, and, judging from its appearance, could not have understood half he said. He used *recherché* words, and talked about *the schools*, and *scholastic theology*, and *the Arminians*, and *Beza's expositions*, etc.

But I must stop here. I have put down a few things that I have seen and heard; I hope they will not be unacceptable to you. Yours sincerely,

J. Q. Day.

Supposed Evangelical Views in England.

The Christian Observer for June, 1833, contains an article "On Works done before Justification," which may be regarded as expressing the views of that party in the Church of England who assume the name of Evangelical Christians. The article relates to a reform proposed by Mr. Wesley and by him established among the Methodists, of whom he was the leader. The writer says: —

"After Mr. Wesley had preached for more than thirty years, he found, as he tells us, the direful heresy of Antinomianism springing up among his people; with a laudable view to eradicate which, several resolutions were passed in Conference, and among them the following: —

"'We have received as a maxim, *that a man is to do nothing in order to justification.* Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should cease from evil and learn to do well; — so God himself teacheth by the prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents should do works meet for repentance; and if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?'"

The writer of the article makes the following observations: —

"I need not, I trust, pause to show the unscriptural character and dangerous tendency of the statement, that men are to do works meet for repentance 'in order to justification' and 'to find favour with God.' Such a statement is inconsistent with that fundamental doctrine of religion, the free justification of man-

kind by virtue of the Saviour's obedience unto death, without any human works or deservings.... The statement above transcribed asserts that 'nothing can be more false' than to say that 'man is to do nothing in order to justification,' yet this is the doctrine of all orthodox Protestant Confessions, grounded on the declarations of Scripture and strongly expressed in the Articles of the Church of England."

It may be true that all the "Confessions" which this writer would call "Orthodox" and "Protestant" are in favour of his opinion, and the authors of those confessions may have supposed their opinion to be "grounded on declarations of Scripture;" still it may be true that their opinion was incorrect, and as false as it was believed to be by Mr. Wesley. I believe the doctrine to be untrue, that it tends to Antinomianism, and that it has done much to bewilder the minds of Christians. I am not acquainted with a single "declaration of Scripture" which seems to me even to favour the doctrine; but much to the contrary.

Justification is supposed to imply the pardon of sin, as well as the approbation of God. What saith the Scripture? "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out.*" In a multitude of instances particular duties are enjoined, and encouraged by promises of Divine favour; such as the following: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you. Seek, and ye shall find." "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." It is also said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." "But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, *he shall live thereby.*" —*Acts* iii. 19. *Matt.* vii. 7. *Luke* vi. 37; xviii. 14. *Heb.* xiii. 16. *Matt.* vii. 21. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 19.

That believers are not to be justified and rewarded according to what Christ has done and suffered is manifest from a multitude of texts of the following import: "Blessed are they who *do* his commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life." "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It is at the final reckoning that men are to be justified or condemned, and the decision is to be according to every man's works, and not according to the works

of Christ. If it shall be found that such has been our faith in him and our love to his precepts that we have forsaken the ways of sin, obeyed his commands, and thus proved ourselves to be his disciples indeed, our faith will be counted to us for righteousness; and on this ground we shall be justified or approved. But whatever may have been our doctrinal opinions, if it shall be found that they did not work by love and purify our hearts, that, notwithstanding our professed faith in Christ, we lived and died in sin, we shall be weighed and found wanting. *Rev.* xxii. 14. 2 *Cor.* v. 10.

How perplexing must it have been to many humble Christians to be taught that "a man has nothing to do in order to justification," when the Bible so constantly teaches that every man shall be rewarded according to his own works!

The writer in the Christian Observer says:—

"Good works, it is well remarked in one of our excellent Homilies, are 'good *declarations* and *testimonies* of our justification': but to make them its precursors, and to perform them, not as the offspring of faith and prompted by love, but 'in order to find favour,' is to put them most delusively out of their right place in the system of human salvation."

I grant that good works should be the "offspring of faith and prompted by love," and I am not acquainted with any good works which are not of this character. The writer, however, seems to be of the opinion that it is wicked and dangerous to hope that we shall be justified or approved of God on account of our obedience to the precepts of his gospel, but that it is right to rely on this obedience as evidence that we are in a justified state. But may we not hope that God will justify and approve such obedience as he has required, and such obedience as he has promised to accept and count to us for righteousness? Besides, what safety could there be in relying on gospel-obedience as evidence of a justified state, were it not that God has assured us that such obedience is pleasing in his sight, and that those who perform it shall be pardoned, accepted, and rewarded?

But let it be understood that I do not speak of faith, repentance, or good works, as anything which *deserves* the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul, but as the conditions on which our merciful God has graciously promised these favours. The proper and primary ground of reliance is the love, the mercy, and the faithfulness of God, who has revealed

to us by his Son that he will forgive the penitent, exalt him who humbles himself, and save those who "do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life." It is wholly of free mercy that he has revealed to us that he will save the sinner who turns from the evil of his ways and does that which is lawful and right. — The supposed danger of hoping to be justified and saved on such conditions or grounds may be the subject of a distinct article.

NOAH WORCESTER.

The closing Paragraph of the Fifteenth Chapter of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

A friend has requested us to notice the closing paragraph of the fifteenth chapter of "*The Decline and Fall*," in which Gibbon alludes to the extraordinary darkness which was observed at the crucifixion of our Saviour, and insinuates his doubts of the truth of the account given us by the evangelists, because so remarkable an occurrence is not mentioned by the philosophers Pliny and Seneca, who lived in that age, and because, moreover, it did not excite "the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind." He thinks that it is exerting, to some extent, an injurious influence on young minds, and believes that it has never been formally answered. Our friend had probably forgotten the conclusive answer which Bishop Watson has given to the objection, in his "*Apology for Christianity*." * But as the whole force of Gibbon's argument lies in his misrepresentations, and his manner of stating it is so insidious, we have concluded to examine his assertions more in detail than Bishop Watson has done. We quote the whole of the passage to which we have referred: —

"Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the life-time of

* An Apology for Christianity, in a series of Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. By R. Watson, D. D., F. R. S.

Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe. A distinct chapter of Pliny is designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual duration; but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar, when, during the greatest part of the year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour. This season of obscurity, which cannot, surely, be compared with the preternatural darkness of the Passion, had been already celebrated by most of the poets and historians of that memorable age."

We have no sympathy with those who pass lightly over the faults of Gibbon. If he was a skeptic, it is not the dictate of charity, on that account alone, to denounce him. Had he openly expressed his doubts, a generous mind would applaud his candour. His sneers and sarcasms may be overlooked. But we cannot so readily pardon his unfairness, the impudence with which he presumes on the stupidity of his readers, nor the meanness which could stoop to petty tricks of language to infuse into the minds of others the doubts which he wanted either the honesty or the courage to avow. The passage we have quoted is one of those insidious paragraphs for which he is noted. The aspect of candour which it wears draws away the attention from its disingenuous and unfounded assertions. We shall examine it in detail, premising that we must beg the indulgence of our readers for devoting so much space to an investigation which in their opinion may require so little.

1. Gibbon tells us that both Pliny and Seneca have recorded all the great phenomena of nature which their indefatigable curiosity could collect. He might have known that such a record was not the object of either the one or the other. Pliny tells us, in his epistle to Vespasian, that "he had undertaken to consider all those subjects which the Greeks include in *the circle of the sciences*,"* or, in other words, to make a *Cyclopædia*. He treats of *all* subjects, from kitchen-herbs to the revolution of the planets. Of course,

* Plin. Hist. Nat. Lib. I. Ad Vesp. Præf.

he adduces facts to illustrate those subjects, or to confirm his positions. But in some cases he mentions only one or two phenomena, in others none at all. Yet Gibbon would have us to infer that he has *recorded* all the prodigies which he had seen or of which he had ever heard.

And how is the case with regard to Seneca? In a work* of about one hundred and fifteen pages, such as the reader has before him, he has discussed the origin and properties of water, the causes of earthquakes, the source of the Nile, the nature of comets, and other matters of like importance; frequently intermingling with his discussions of physical questions moral considerations. The phenomena to which he alludes are comparatively few, and, as the most superficial reader must perceive, are introduced either incidentally or to illustrate the case in hand. In one book he does not mention any remarkable phenomenon, and in several other books alludes only to four or five. Yet Gibbon would have us believe that in such a work are recorded "all the great phenomena of nature" which "*the indefatigable curiosity*" of its author could collect.

But aside from all this, Gibbon must have known, if he examined the books to which he refers, that his assertion was untrue. Pliny has alluded to phenomena — for instance, to certain earthquakes at Rome† — of which Seneca must have been aware, but to which he has not referred. On the other hand, Pliny has omitted facts which Seneca has recorded. The latter has given us an account‡ of the earthquake at Campania, which, in the year 63 or 64, destroyed a large part of Pompeii — about sixteen years before that celebrated city was overwhelmned by an eruption of Vesuvius, — considerably injured Herculaneum, and was seriously felt at Naples. The same fact is mentioned by Tacitus; § and the late researches at Pompeii have discovered many traces of the catastrophe. Now Pliny has several times alluded to Campania, and mentioned both Herculaneum and Pompeii, ‖ but has altogether omitted to give us an account of this remarkable occurrence, which happened only about twelve years before he published his work on Natural History, at a distance of little more than a hundred miles from Rome, and, as we may infer from Seneca,

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* Naturales Quæstiones, — *Questions in Physics.*
† Nat. Hist. Lib. II. 84. ‡ Natural. Quæst. Lib. VI. 1.
§ Annal. XV. 22. ‖ Nat. Hist. Lib. III. 5.

produced great excitement. — But this is enough, we think, to expose the dishonesty of Gibbon's assertion that each of these writers has recorded "all the remarkable phenomena of nature which his indefatigable curiosity could collect."

2. But again, to make his case still stronger, he says that "a distinct chapter of Pliny is designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual duration; but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar." The unwary reader of Gibbon may be a little surprised, perhaps, to learn that this *distinct*, remarkable chapter of Pliny may be contained in less than two lines. For his satisfaction we give it below.* The whole sentence is insidious. Both "eclipses" and "contents himself" are equivocal. But we cannot consume our pages with a lengthened comment. We can only remark, using Gibbon's phrase in our own way, that if Pliny "*contented himself*" with recording only one phenomenon, we can see no very pertinent reason why he might not have had others in reserve.

3. Another assertion which requires a passing notice is, that the age of Pliny and Seneca was "an age of science and history." This is one of those broad, equivocal statements which require so much qualification that it might be questioned whether they contain any truth. Compared with preceding times, it *was* an age of science; but Gibbon probably knew, as well as any of his readers, that, compared with recent days, it had but small claims to that eminent title. He might have known that it was a credulous age, and that the most prodigious phenomena were received with but little question, not only by the mass of mankind, but by men of science; and that the latter made but little use, in a scientific point of view, of the facts which came under their observation.† He might have remembered what Pliny has said, in his dedication to

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* Fiunt prodigiosi et longiores solis defectus: qualis occiso Dictatore Cæsare, et Antoniano bello, totius pæne anni pallore continuo. — *Nat. Hist.* II. 30.

† It is only in an age when the true value of physical facts in reference to the sciences is in some good degree appreciated, that extraordinary phenomena excite more than a passing alarm. We have accounts of recent phenomena of a remarkable character occurring in Asia, which would have passed unrecorded had it not been for the zeal of scientific men from Europe; among others, of a violent and destructive earthquake which happened at Cutch, in the Delta of the Indus, in 1819; in allusion to which it is stated by Lieut. Burnes, who examined the site in 1826–29, that "these wonderful phenomena passed *unheeded* by the inhabitants of Cutch." — Lyell's *Geology*, Vol. I. ch. xxiii. pp. 465–468

Vespasian, by way of apology for his work, "that the path which he had chosen was little known to authors, nor was it one which the mind was eager to pursue; that no Roman had attempted to treat of those subjects, and no Grecian had gone over them all." * He might have remembered that the progress which had been made in physical science was small; and although philosophers had laboured in some of its departments with great assiduity, yet that their knowledge was scanty.† There was little or none of that spirit of scientific research which is so intense and active in our own age; and there were few of those facilities for collecting facts, which are now compelling the heavens and the earth to give up their hidden knowledge. There were only the ill-directed beginnings of those labours which are building up that gigantic and magnificent edifice, which, already towering to the heavens, strikes the beholder with admiration and awe.

4. We can notice only one other instance of Gibbon's disingenuousness and unfounded assertion. He says, at the commencement of the paragraph we have quoted, that "the *whole earth*, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours;" and adds, in a note, that "Origen and a few modern critics are desirous of confining it to the land of Judea." But he seems to have suddenly forgotten even this doubtful and insidious admission, and proceeds on the assumption that the darkness covered the whole world, that Pliny and Seneca must have felt the immediate effects of it, and that it was "the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe." It would have been well, if, instead of putting the *commentators* in battle-array against each other, he had himself decided whether it is *neces-*

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* Nat. Hist. I. Ad Vesp. Præf.

† At this period comparatively many facts had been collected; but it was by *gradual accumulation* in books. Pliny refers us to two thousand volumes, from which he had principally obtained his knowledge of physics. There were few or none to arrange these facts, or who thought it worth their while to draw inferences from them. Of Pliny himself, the most distinguished Roman writer on Natural Science of the age to which Gibbon refers, whose works have come down to us, the learned author of a recent work on geology remarks, that "in this department [the changes on the earth's surface] as in others, he has restricted himself to the task of a compiler, without reasoning on the facts stated by him or attempting to digest them into regular order."—*Lyell's Geology*, Vol. I. c. ii. p. 22. His work is a monument of learning for the age in which it was written, but as anyone may observe who will take the trouble to examine it, it abounds in extravagancies. See Enfield's *Hist. Philos.* Vol. II. ch. ii. 8.

sary to infer from the evangelical account, that "the whole earth" was involved in obscurity. But this would probably have deprived his shaft of half its force. Nor is this disingenuousness the worst of the case. In one of his notes he says, that "the Fathers would seem to cover the whole earth with darkness, and that they are followed in this by *most of the moderns*." In another note, to which we have just referred, he tells his readers that "Origen and *a few modern critics* are *desirous* of confining it to the land of Judea." We know not where Gibbon obtained his authority for such statements. They seem to us to have been dictated by gross ignorance, or by something which would assuredly fasten upon a person of less reputation the charge of dishonesty. The very reverse of what he has stated is the fact. *Nearly all* the modern commentators of extended reputation are not indeed *desirous* to confine the occurrence of the phenomenon to the land of Judea, but it is their *opinion* that it did *not* probably extend beyond those limits. After a close examination of the best authorities within our reach,* we have not been able to find *one*, out of the great host of modern commentators, who is inclined to believe that the darkness covered the "whole earth," and no more than eight or ten who extend it beyond Judea; † and most of the latter are but little known.

Were we not afraid of wearying the patience of our readers, we might make additional comments on the passage to which our attention has been called. We doubt whether another paragraph can be found, even in "The Decline and Fall," so imposing and at the same time so disingenuous. We have said enough, we think, to show with what scrutiny one should peruse the writings of Gibbon, and with how great distrust his assertions should be received. If the passage we have examined would not convict him of dishonesty before a too sensitive charity, at least its ingenuity will not conceal the vulgar stratagems of an ignoble mind.

But still the question returns, why it was that the darkness at the crucifixion was not recorded by Pliny and Seneca. This question can be satisfactorily answered after two explanatory remarks.

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* Wolf. Curæ Phil. et Crit. — Poole's Synopsis. — Biblia Critica. — Koecher, in his "Analecta," expresses himself so loosely that we have received no satisfaction from him on this point.

† Grotius thinks that it must be referred to the Roman empire, or at least to the larger part of it.

The account given of the event by St. Matthew, is this: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." *Matt.* xxvii. 45. It is well known that the word γῆ (*gē*), here translated *land*, like the kindred words in other languages, is used in the New Testament in a broader or narrower sense according to its connexion. Sometimes it signifies the land as distinguished from the water; sometimes, the whole habitable earth; sometimes, a province or particular territory; and sometimes, only a town or city. We have frequent examples of its use in the two latter senses. For instance, "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn" * — i. e. all the tribes of *the land of Israel*, the reference being to the destruction of Jerusalem; "Bethlehem, *the land* of Judah;" † "*the land* of Zebulon, and *the land* of Naphthalim;" ‡ "*The land* of Sodom." § Now there is nothing in the whole account which the evangelists have given, that obliges us to believe that the darkness extended beyond the land of Judea, or even beyond the vicinity of Jerusalem, and the phrase "*all the land*," as we perceive by the examples given above, may have this limitation. Moreover, it seems to us to be the very expression which one would naturally use, in speaking of the immediate territory in which the phenomenon occurred. We assume, therefore, what there is nothing in the evangelical account to contradict, that the darkness covered only Jerusalem and its vicinity, or, at most, the land of Judea.

Again, the darkness probably was not *intense*. In the common acceptation of the word, darkness admits of degrees. The darkness of the crucifixion, then, may have been slight, for anything that appears to the contrary, and the general tenor of the narrative would give the impression to our minds that it was so. Besides, it can be shown, as we think and shall attempt to prove in a future number, that it was the natural attendant of the earthquake. But if this was the case, we may conclude it could not have been more intense than similar phenomena which have attended other earthquakes; and that such actually was its character there is in our own minds but little doubt.

Now, in the first place, there is no *antecedent* probability that a phenomenon of such a character, and so limited in its

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* Matt. xxiv. 30. † Matt. ii. 6.
‡ Matt. iv. 15. § Matt. xi. 24.

extent, should have been mentioned by any Roman historian or philosopher. They might or they might not have recorded it. At the best, there is only an even chance that they would have alluded to it, even on the supposition that they had known it.

2. As the age in which the phenomenon occurred was exceedingly credulous, and, as we have before said, the greatest prodigies were received without much question, even by scientific men, and as little or no use was made of physical facts in a scientific point of view, we may infer that the historian would record only those occurrences which *to him* seemed the most remarkable, or which, owing to some peculiar circumstances, were especially interesting to himself or his readers. It is antecedently *improbable*, therefore, that a Roman writer would have mentioned an obscuration of the sun which lasted only three hours, which happened in one of the most remote and despised provinces of the empire, nearly two thousand miles from Rome, and which in that age and to an ordinary observer could not have seemed very remarkable. "Why," asks Bp. Watson, "should all the world take notice of a darkness which extended itself for a few miles about Jerusalem, and lasted but three hours?* The Italians, especially, had no reason to remark the event as singular; since they were accustomed at that time, as they are at present, to see the neighbouring regions so darkened, for days together, by the eruptions of Ætna and Vesuvius, that no man could know his neighbour."

3. In the age to which we have referred, there was no spirit of scientific research. There were no collectors of facts. Scientific knowledge had gradually, and in a certain sense accidentally, become accumulated in books. Pliny gives us to understand that he had drawn nearly all his facts from writers who had gone before him. Now it is altogether probable, at least there is nothing to the contrary, that the only record of the darkness at the crucifixion was to be found in the evangelical accounts. But the sect of the Christians was obscure and despised. It is not even mentioned by Pliny † or Seneca.

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* The memorable darkness which occurred in New England, May 19, 1780, was so great in most parts of the country "that people were unable to read common print, determine the time of day by their clocks or watches, dine, or manage their domestic business, without the light of candles." —*Mem. Amer. Acad.* Vol. I. pp. 234–5. Yet how little interest did this excite out of New England!

† Bishop Watson, indeed, says, "There is a passage in the Natural

What books of the New Testament had as yet been written were still less known. It is not at all probable, therefore, that Pliny and Seneca should have resorted to them. Besides, they were the *religious* books of a sect, and for this reason, also, it is highly improbable that they would have searched such writings for scientific facts. Indeed, we have almost conclusive evidence that Pliny did not. He might have found in the sacred books of the Christians, especially in the Old Testament, an abundance of the most remarkable facts, which to a pagan would have appeared no more incredible than many which he has mentioned. But among the numerous references he has given to the works which he consulted, we do not find the Jewish writings or the evangelical narratives alluded to in a single instance.

4. It was not the object of either Pliny or Seneca to record all the facts within his knowledge. Seneca, especially, had a very different design. It cannot be *very* wonderful, therefore, that they should have omitted to mention the occurrence we have been considering. But what makes the case still stronger, and, in our opinion, settles the question, is, that both the one and the other have failed to record important phenomena which happened in their own land, and which were of such a character that they could not have failed to record them had it been their object to mention all the natural phenomena of which they knew. If they omitted these, no reasoning will convince us that they should necessarily have recorded the other. It is more illogical, therefore, to doubt the veracity of Luke or Matthew because two Roman writers have not alluded to the darkness at the crucifixion, than it is to question the authority of Seneca because Pliny has given us no account of the earthquake at Pompeii.

We here close the argument. We have presented sufficient considerations, we think, to satisfy a candid mind that there is little force in the objection to which our attention has been called. It never would have been so prominent, had it not been for the imposing aspect in which Gibbon has clothed

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History of Pliny, which, how much soever it may have been overlooked, contains, I think, a very strong allusion to the Christians; and clearly intimates he had heard of their miracles. In speaking concerning the origin of magic, he says, 'There is also another faction of magic, derived from the Jews, Moses and Lotopea, and subsisting at present.' " See also the Bishop's note on this. But it is well known that the Jews themselves practised magic in that age, and Pliny probably alluded to that fact; regarding the later practice of magic as the same with the Old-Testament miracles.

it. Its strength vanishes when his misrepresentations are exposed. But if this were not the fact, and even if the objection were formidable in itself, still it could only be regarded as *a difficulty*, which it might not be easy to clear up, but it could never impeach the authority of three independent, honest witnesses, unless it were *demonstrated* that Pliny and Seneca must have known and *must* have recorded the darkness of the Passion had it really occurred.

In some future number we shall endeavour to explain the phenomenon and some of the attendant circumstances.

J. Q. Day.

Letters to Unbelievers.

No. II.

UNREASONABLE MODES OF ATTACKING CHRISTIANITY.

Fellow-Citizens,

My last letter contained an explanation of the nature, causes, occasions, and present state of infidelity. In the present communication I shall endeavour to prove, to the satisfaction of every honest mind, that most of your modes of attacking Christianity are irrational. Let the same kind of reasoning which you employ against the gospel be applied in a similar way to any opinion, system, society, or institution whatsoever, and I sincerely believe that you would unhesitatingly pronounce it sophistical and unsatisfactory. And if you will give your candid attention to my remarks and illustrations, I think you will admit my conclusions and acknowledge to your own souls that most of your opposition to religion is unreasonable.

I. *Christians of Past Ages.*

1. What has been the intellectual, moral, and religious condition of heathen nations? Have they not been degraded by ignorance, enslaved by priestcraft, tormented by superstí-

tion, debased by idolatry, polluted by crime, and made wretched by wickedness? Have they not excluded woman from her rightful share in the blessings of life? Have they not sacrificed human victims to their idols? No one acquainted with history will deny these facts.

Now suppose I should reason concerning these undisputed truths in the following manner: "You learn from these particulars the true condition of the heathen world. You see what unaided reason can do for mankind. Her natural, her best, her only fruits are ignorance, superstition, iniquity, and wretchedness. She is therefore a great curse to the human family; for these evils do not exist among the brute creation; and consequently it becomes our solemn duty to labour for her destruction."

Would you consider this correct reasoning? No. You would doubtless reply: "We admit the accuracy of your statement, but we deny the legitimacy of your conclusion. Your description, however, is partial and deceptive. For reason produces other and better results even among the uncivilized; and the evils mentioned arise principally from her want of cultivation. Let her be educated and enlightened, and she will yield a rich return of virtue and happiness. And to attempt her destruction, because in a state of ignorance she does not perform impossibilities, would be as absurd as to kill the child because he does not exhibit the powers of manhood. Your attack upon reason, on account of the conduct of the heathen, is truly unreasonable."

2. Let me now apply this illustration. What has been the condition of Christians in some former ages of the church? Many of the number were uneducated, superstitious, fanatical, bigoted. They persecuted each other for an honest difference of opinion. They waged wars for the promotion of sectarian views of religion. They submitted to the tyranny of a corrupt priesthood. They exhibited little of the spirit and few of the virtues of the gospel. These and similar facts no one will deny.

What use do you make of these facts in your attacks upon Christianity? Call to mind the contents of some of your papers, pamphlets, and books. Recollect the burden of many a conversation and lecture. The amount of what you have said may be stated thus: "You see in these particulars the only legitimate fruits of the gospel. And will you suffer a system to survive which has produced such an abundant harvest of ignorance, vice, and misery? No; down with super-

stition, down with priestcraft; down with the Bible." This is one of your favourite modes of attacking Christianity. But is it not as unreasonable to condemn religion on account of the conduct of professed believers of past ages, as to condemn reason on account of the conduct of ancient heathen nations? Yes; in my estimation the former is much more irrational than the latter. For unassisted reason has uniformly produced ignorance, superstition, idolatry, priestcraft, and wickedness. Read the history of ancient and modern heathen nations, and you will not feel disposed to controvert this assertion. When the Christian church was in its most degraded condition, the great body of professed believers were much superior to their heathen neighbours; and many of the number acquired knowledge and exhibited a virtuous character amidst the general corruption. Besides, the gospel never authorized any one of the evils mentioned; it condemned the whole, in the most unequivocal language; so that, after all, we must attribute them to reason or infidelity. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn Christianity on account of the unchristian conduct of practical unbelievers, than it would be to condemn reason on account of the evils which have always existed in every heathen nation? I appeal to your honesty for an answer.

II. *Christians of the Present Period.*

1. What has been the character of unbelievers in modern times? Collect into one company all the individuals of both sexes who have professed to reject Christ and Christianity. Among the number you will discover a considerable portion of the ignorant, the degraded, the abandoned. You will notice many of the intemperate, many of the corrupters of youth, many thieves, robbers, and pirates, many of the inmates of prisons and the victims of the gallows. I state facts which no intelligent person will deny; not in order to cast reproach upon the virtuous portion of the company, but for the sake of the argument.

Suppose I should make these facts a foundation for the following conclusions: "In the lives and deaths of these debased men and women you behold the natural fruits of infidelity. Some of the number have confessed that their downward course commenced in the neglect of the means of religious improvement. No doubt others would have made similar confessions, had they disclosed the whole truth in re-

lation to their progress in iniquity. Yes; whenever you hear of a drunkard, a libertine, a shameless female, you may be sure they are unbelievers. So, too, when you read of a thief, a robber, a pirate, you may rank them with infidels. And so sure as you have anything to do with infidel principles, so sure you will be led on from one degree of iniquity to another, until you are completely ruined."

Would you call this correct reasoning? To this statement you would probably reply in terms like the following: "We acknowledge that many abandoned men and women have professed to have no belief in Christianity; but we do not admit that it was their unbelief which made them depraved. It was their depravity that induced them to renounce that religion which threatened the wicked with future punishment. They were ruined before they called themselves unbelievers; and many of them we never acknowledged as belonging to our party. They are no fair specimen of our company. We ask you to look at the virtuous, to learn the influence of our principles. As we have no expectation of another life, if we act consistently with our belief we shall surely avoid everything which can give us misery or shorten our days. And to condemn our principles, on account of the character of the abandoned portion of our party, is truly unreasonable."

2. Let me apply this illustration. Look at the Christians of our country. They are numerous; they belong to every class and condition in society; they profess every variety of creed. Among this great company you may behold every diversity of character. You see some who are superstitious, some who are fanatical, some who are bigoted, some who are dishonest, some who are intemperate, some who are licentious, and some who are guilty of other crimes. These are the facts as they exist before the world.

What use do you make of these facts. You endeavour to employ them for the destruction of Christianity. Look over your papers of the last five years. A very large proportion of their pages are filled with accounts of the unchristian conduct and dispositions of professed believers. This has been made one principal argument against the truth and value of our religion. You reason on this subject in terms somewhat like the following: "Here you see the fruits of the gospel. One man is turned out of the church for an honest difference of opinion; another is disturbing the peace of his neighbourhood by his fanaticism. One, who is a deacon, has cheated his neighbour; and a minister has probably been guilty of

murder. And will you any longer tolerate a system which destroys the peace of families and is a curse to the country?"

This, then, is another of your common modes of attacking Christianity. But is it not as unreasonable to condemn the gospel on account of the vices of professing Christians, as to condemn infidelity on account of the wickedness of professed infidels? Yes; it is much more irrational. For there is nothing in infidelity to deter anyone from wickedness. Many have confessed that it led them into vice; and that, if true, it was not useful to individuals or society. At this moment, there are in this commonwealth numerous young men who were virtuous until they embraced infidel principles; now they are very thoroughly depraved. I think one or more of such cases must occur to the minds of most of you. From much inquiry, some reading, and considerable observation, I am fully satisfied that unbelief naturally leads to vice and wretchedness. Nor is this all. The number of immoral unbelievers is very large in proportion to the whole body; while the number of professed believers who disgrace their profession is very small in comparison with the whole multitude. Besides, every sincere Christian is ready to condemn the iniquities of a professor of religion, as severely as he denounces those of an infidel, and much more so. And above all, the gospel forbids every evil which now exists in Christendom. It threatens punishment to all who disobey the divine precepts. So far, then, as anyone does wrong, so far his sin is attributable to practical infidelity, and not to his belief in Jesus. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn Christianity on account of the unchristian conduct of practical infidels, than it would be to condemn infidelity on account of the vices and crimes of unbelievers? Let your conscience answer.

III. *Differences of Opinion among Christians.*

1. What is the present state of belief on religious subjects among the anti-christians of our country? If I may credit your own statements, there exists almost every possible variety. Some believe in one God and some in no God. Some believe that Jesus was a good man, others regard him as an impostor, and others, again, pretend that no such person ever lived on earth. Some believe in a future life, and others think we shall all perish like the brutes. In short, there is no kind of agreement in opinion among unbelievers, on the

subject of religion. No one acquainted with your writings will deny the truth of this statement.

Suppose I should adopt the following reasoning on this subject: "You see that infidels differ from one another on almost every religious subject. This great diversity of opinion manifests the danger of renouncing revelation. Their principal exertions seem to be aimed at the destruction of everything which can promote holiness and happiness. They take no pains to build up any code of laws for the preservation of society. It will be time enough to attend to their claims when they shall have framed a new system of morals, better adapted to human nature than any we now possess, and one which shall make themselves wiser and better and happier than their Christian neighbours. And until such a period, you will act very unwisely to read one page of their writings, or to listen to one word of their conversation or harangues. Until they agree on some fundamental principles of belief and conduct, you should consider their pretensions unworthy the least notice or attention."

Would you approve this mode of attacking infidelity? I think you would make some such reply as this: "We admit the truth of your statements. We do not pretend to be agreed among ourselves. We must first remove the great mass of error from the minds of people, before we attempt to rear the temple of truth. At present, it is our main business to prove all religions false, and pernicious in their effects upon individuals and society. We all believe according to the evidence presented, on whatever subject arises. We are free inquirers, released from all the shackles of superstition and cowardice. We ask no one to believe our opinions. We only desire the people to give up their prejudices and prepossessions. When we have produced a universal skepticism as to every existing creed, then we shall find time to prepare an unexceptionable system of morals. And to condemn our cause on account of our differences of opinion is perfectly unreasonable."

2. Let me apply this illustration. Protestant Christians profess to take the Scriptures as their standard of faith and practice. Each individual of the whole body is exhorted to search them for himself and abide by the results of his investigation. Owing to the original differences in the constitution of the minds of people, to our different education and influences and prejudices, and to the obscurity of some parts of the sacred writings, there naturally arises a considerable

diversity of belief among equally sincere and pious Christians. No believer will be disposed to deny the truth of this statement.

Now what use do you make of this fact in your attacks on Christianity? The substance of your remarks may be thus expressed: "You call upon us to embrace the gospel. We ask you to mention its essential principles. No two of you give us the same answers. What one pronounces saving truth, another denounces as ruinous error. Before you call upon us to believe, you should come to some agreement among yourselves. So long as you remain thus divided in sentiment, you cannot expect us to listen to your claims. If those who profess to be the expounders of Christianity cannot inform us in what its fundamental doctrines consist, surely this circumstance ought to condemn the system as a human fabrication. We shall accordingly endeavour to destroy its pretensions to the character of a revelation, and try to induce the young to give no attention to the subject, until you can tell us what the gospel is."

This is another of your common modes of attacking Christianity. But is it not as unreasonable to condemn religion because a difference of opinion exists among the disciples of Jesus, as to condemn infidelity on account of the want of agreement among unbelievers? Yes; to me it appears much more unreasonable. For when we ask you to believe the gospel, we do not mean any one of the various sectarian systems. We wish you to go directly to the Founder of our religion, and learn for yourselves the essentials of Christianity. We desire you to exercise the same rights which we claim for ourselves. Above all, we wish you to acquire that holiness of heart and life which furnishes an internal witness of the truth of revelation. Nor is this all. While unbelievers are agreed on no principles of faith or morals, there is among Christians all but the most entire unanimity as to everything essential to a holy life, a peaceful death, and a happy immortality. We all believe in the existence and perfections of one all-perfect Deity. We all believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world. We all believe that the Scriptures contain the record of a divine revelation. We all believe that religion consists in loving our heavenly Father supremely, and our fellow-men as ourselves. We all believe that no one can be truly happy either here or hereafter without moral goodness. All our differences of opinion might be banished from

the world without the least injury to the cause of Christianity. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn the gospel on account of the various creeds of professed believers, than it would be to condemn infidelity on account of the total want of agreement among unbelievers? Let common sense return an honest answer.

IV. *Expense of maintaining Christianity.*

1. How much does it cost our commonwealth to furnish the means of education to all its inhabitants? To answer this question satisfactorily, you must estimate the expense of school-houses, academies, colleges, and other necessary buildings. You must also ascertain the amount of salaries paid to male and female teachers of public and private schools, to preceptors of academies, and professors in higher literary institutions. To all this you must add the cost of books and apparatus, the value of the time of those pupils who are old enough to earn wages, and a variety of contingencies. When you have obtained the sum, you will learn that it costs this state several hundred thousand dollars, annually, to provide the means of education for the whole people.

Suppose a reformer should come among you from one of the states of our Union in which no public provision is made for the education of children and youth. Suppose he should go from town to town, lecturing in terms like the following: "Citizens of Massachusetts, permit me to say that your conduct in relation to the subject of education is exceedingly foolish. You annually expend for this object several hundred thousand dollars. And what do you receive for all this money? Nothing but an infinite variety of evils. You erect half a dozen buildings in every town. You support a class of men and women who are too lazy and too proud to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They take your children from all useful labour, and they qualify them for every species of mischief and crime. If none were taught to read or write, there would be no newspapers to keep you all the time quarrelling about politics; there would be none of those law-books to cheat you out of your property; there would be none of those books of travels to entice away your young men from their country; there would be no forgers nor counterfeiters; in short, there would be none of that infinite series of evils which now consume your time and money and destroy your peace and equality. I speak from my own experience. I know

nothing of your book-learning; and I have amassed a fortune. I have experienced no inconvenience, and enjoyed much more happiness than my reading neighbours. I think, therefore, that you act very unwisely to expend such sums of precious gold and silver for that which produces nothing but misery and ruin; and as a reformer I call upon you to close your school-houses, dismiss your teachers, destroy your printing-presses, and burn your libraries."

Would you consider this sound and conclusive reasoning? I think you would be very apt to say in reply: "Sir, we have listened attentively to your remarks. We differ from you altogether on this question. You ought to know that the various evils to which you have alluded are the abuses of education, and not the natural fruits of knowledge. You ought also to understand that money does not answer every want of human nature. We have tried the experiment, to our own satisfaction. We know, by our own experience, that the pleasures of the mind are much superior to those of the body. We also know that our information not only gives us daily comfort, but qualifies us for greater enjoyment and usefulness. Besides, you ought to see that without learning we should all relapse into a state of barbarism. And although you may have lived very well without a knowledge of letters, yet this is altogether owing to the civilized and educated state of those around you. Instead, therefore, of being a real reformer, as you seem to believe yourself to be, you are labouring to degrade us to the savage condition, to destroy all the refinements of life and all the blessings of society. Your present attempt to subvert the means of education and knowledge, on account of their abuses and the expense of their maintenance, fully proves that you do not understand even the first principles of correct reasoning."

2. Let me apply this illustration. It costs this country a large sum of money to support Christian institutions. This fact no one is disposed to deny. What use do you make of this circumstance in your attacks upon Christianity? You proclaim it to the public in every possible manner; in your conversation, in your discourses, in your publications; thus making an incessant appeal to avarice, the lowest passion of human nature. The foreign mother of American infidelity repeats the fact in almost every lecture of that volume to which you look as an oracle of wisdom. Her satellites echo it from one end of the country to the other, in terms like the following: "Citizens of the United States, you act like fools,

It costs you twenty millions of money every year for the support of your religion! Yes; twenty millions are worse than wasted, in building churches, and supporting a class of lazy, quarrelsome ministers, who divide your families, consume your time, distract your brains, and eat up your substance. We have done without any of your superstition, and we have experienced no disadvantage from our unbelief and irreligion. We therefore call upon you to turn your temples into halls of science, to set your clergy to work, to spend your Sabbaths in searching into the qualities of matter, and, above all, to save your precious money." This, likewise, is a most favourite mode of attacking Christianity.

But is it not as unreasonable to condemn Christianity, on account of its abuses and its expenses, as it would be to destroy education, for the same reasons? Yes; the former is much more irrational than the latter. For what purpose were we created? For happiness. What can confer this invaluable blessing? Money? No. Look into the world. Is not gold oftener a curse than a comfort? And what solace can it render in sickness? What support in trial? What consolation in affliction? What peace to remorse? What joy in death? What preparation for eternity? Can education make men good? It may qualify them for greater evil as well as for greater virtue. Of itself it is insufficient for the wants of man. Religion, and religion alone, can enable him to answer the design of his creation. We have tried the experiment for ourselves. We have lived without the influence of the gospel on our hearts. We have since yielded, in some humble degree, to its guidance. We can testify, from our own experience, that it satisfies all the desires of the mind. We know that it makes us better and happier. And although you may have felt no great inconvenience from its absence from your hearts, it is only because those around you were actuated by its heavenly spirit. You believe yourselves to be reformers, but you are assuredly labouring for the overthrow of everything valuable on earth, education, morals, religion, domestic enjoyment, individual and social happiness. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to labour for the destruction of religion on account of the expense of its maintenance, than it would be to destroy the means of education for the same reason? Judge ye for yourselves.

B. Whitman.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Deist's Immortality, and an Essay on Man's Accountability for his Belief. By Lysander Spooner. Boston, 1834. 8vo. pp. 14.

This is the title of a pamphlet sent us through the Post-office with the author's respects; but who the author is, notwithstanding he has given us his name, we have no means of even *guessing*. But since in sending it he doubtless meant us an act of civility, we receive it accordingly, and will do what we suppose he will thank us for, devote a paragraph or two to the consideration of its merits.

"*The Deist's Immortality!*" The title struck us with some surprise; not that we never heard of Deists who believed in the immortality of the soul, but because we have never, though extensively acquainted with unbelievers in Christianity, met with one who had any belief in a future state of existence, and we had therefore concluded that it was doubtful whether any such at the present day could be found. We are glad, however, to find we were wrong. We hail it as a good symptom, that even a deistical pamphleteer ventures to offer reasons for believing in another life. We hold the hope of another world to be so important, we consider it of such great price, that we are glad to find it advocated by anyone; and if by one more than another, by one who from the name he assumes may have influence where a professed Christian would have none. We say, then, to Mr. Spooner, that we will not find fault with him for "casting out devils," though he "follow not with us." When we find a Deist advocating the truth, we receive him into fellowship just so far as he advocates it, but no farther. Mr. Spooner's arguments are not new. They are arguments which we suspect he would not easily have found, had there not been such a religion as the Christian and such a class of people as the clergy. All that is valuable in *The Deist's Immortality* we had previously read in the writings of Dr. Channing and other eminent defenders of Christianity. Had the author been aware of his obligations to Christianity, we think he could hardly have spoken of it so slightingly as he has; he might, perhaps, have acknowledged the source whence he derived his belief. His notions of a future state, which he contrasts with what he calls the Bible-view, he ought to be aware are not notions peculiar to Deists; so far

from it, they have been much the most frequently advocated by Christians, and it was in Christian writings, we presume, that he found them, else he would never have suspected them. His condemnation of the Orthodox heaven is a matter which he and the Orthodox may settle between themselves. We will only remark, that did the Orthodox understand by Redemption what the Apostles understood by it, they might easily enough defend themselves against the attacks of the Deist.

The second article, "*An Essay on Man's Accountability for his Belief*," we are sorry to say does no credit to the writer. Before he condemns a matter he should understand it. He shows himself much better skilled in denunciation than in scriptural interpretation, and in defending man's freedom from blame for his belief, exhibits a spirit very nearly related to that which erected the Inquisition. He entirely mistakes the teaching of the Scriptures on this point; he errs in his premises, and therefore fails in his reasoning. He deals about him most furiously, strikes here and there tremendous blows, but none of them touch Christianity, none of them touch any part of the Bible; though we own we thought, on perusing the Essay, that some of the heaviest fell upon the popular theology of the day, and we felt confirmed in what has long been our opinion, that Orthodoxy is answerable for nearly all the unbelief amongst us. The arguments of unbelievers are exclusively aimed at the absurdities and cruelties of the popular theology. How thankful should Liberal Christians be, that they, through the mercy of God, have been enabled to obtain more rational views! and how anxious should they be to spread their rational views, in order to save the community from the horrors of infidelity!

O. A. Brownson.

Gospel-Truths. A Discourse preached before the Unitarian Societies lately established in Franklin and Salisbury, New Hampshire, at the Close of a Term of Ministration, November, 1833. By Horatio Wood. Published by request. Cambridge, James Munroe & Co. 1834. 8vo. pp. 15.

It was the object of this discourse "to present, at one view, an explicit statement of gospel truth, as the writer held it in reference to the principal topics of controversy in this community at the present day, and as he had from time to time expounded it to his hearers." It contains a plain statement of his views of the unity of God, the person and offices of Christ, the influences of the holy spirit, the atonement, regeneration, faith and good

works. It is earnest and sensible, remarkable, we think, for the aptness of its illustrations from Scripture, and is without a particle of sectarian animosity. Those to whom it was preached will be benefited by its perusal, and we hope its influence will extend beyond their circle. We quote the closing paragraph.

"And now what shall I say? That my views of the religion of Jesus are, beyond all question, in every respect true? that through no other can there be salvation? that there is no goodness or piety except in believing these? that the day is coming when the hollowness of all others will be perceived, and when it will be found that these form the gate to heaven? No. And yet I believe the views which I have preached as undoubtingly as if I said all this. However others may regard it, to me such an assumption savours of a spirit which is far from becoming in those who profess to sit at the feet of Jesus as humble inquirers after the truth. It is virtually a prohibition of that free discussion of the sentiments of others which may lead to the adoption of them. It bears too much the stamp of Party. It is setting up one's own judgment as a standard, and attempting to bring all others into submission to it. It is a pretension to infallibility, or there is no such thing. But I do say, Think of the doctrines I have preached. Examine them. Weigh the proof for and against them. Reject what upon mature consideration you cannot adopt. Hold fast that which you think to be good. 'Be fully persuaded in your own minds.' Should you adopt, in the main, as yours, the views now set before you, after all that may be presented on the other side, be not moved by denunciations, or exclusion, or coldness, or sneers, or sighs, or entreaties, or tears even,—these are not argument. In respect to man, be independent. Hold yourselves accountable only to God. Before him in all things walk conscientiously. And 'the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.'"

An Address delivered to the Pupils of the South-Parish Sunday-School [in Portsmouth, N. H.] Nov. 17. 1833, *being the Sabbath after the Interment of Rev. Nathan Parker, D. D.* By A Teacher. Portsmouth, N. H., 1834. 24mo. pp. 24.

The author of this truly delightful tribute to the memory of one of the best of men we presume to be the gentleman who is well known as the Superintendent of the Sunday-school connected with the Unitarian church in Portsmouth. The subject of the Address is the excellencies of Dr. Parker's character; and though necessarily crowded into a few pages, enough is presented to display its most striking features, and excite deep veneration for it as one of those exalted patterns of Christian worth, which are occasionally raised up seemingly with the

design to assist our feeble conceptions of the great Example set before us for our emulation by reflecting it more vividly to our view.

From his habits of close devotedness to his people, Dr. Parker was less generally known than many others have been whose powers of mind and moral worth are hardly to be named in comparison; but for the sake of the church, for the sake of our race, we do most earnestly trust that an example so rich in the most exalted Christian virtues will not be suffered to be embalmed only in the affections of the flock of his charge. It was the distinguished privilege of the writer of the Address before us to be his intimate and confidential friend, and we are glad to see that he is disposed to give to the public somewhat of the fruit of his intimacy; we wish it were more, for we are sure, from this specimen, that the office of Dr. Parker's biographer could hardly fall into more competent hands.

We quote those passages which relate particularly to the character of the revered subject of this Address.

"Were I to point out any one trait which I thought most distinguishing in our beloved pastor's character as a Christian, I should name Faith. By this I mean an unwavering belief and trust which led him to view all things as under the superintending providence of God; a perfect conviction, evinced by his whole mode of thinking and speaking, that this providence was directed by infinite wisdom and infinite love, and supported by infinite power; that the greatest and the least events were taking place under His control; and that these events would all be overruled for good. Whenever the perversity of men, or their ignorance, brought trouble or calamity upon individuals or a community, — while he deeply lamented the evil, and mourned over the sufferings which would occur in the process, he never for a moment doubted that the good purposes of God would be accomplished, and that the happiness of the virtuous, however disturbed for the present, would be ultimately promoted. By this faith, this confidence, he could always perceive 'the bright radiance of the clear sky beyond the gatherings of the darkest tempest;' and the minor troubles of life, those trials of every day's existence, which, far more frequently than great temptations, overthrow the balance of the Christian character, he could put aside with his hand, as unworthy to move him.

"To acquire this faith, my children, no great powers of mind, no uncommon acquirements are absolutely necessary. Such powers and acquirements, rightly directed, will serve to enlighten and confirm the Christian faith; but I have heard our deceased friend often say that the most beautiful ornament of the highly cultivated intellect was to have that child-like trust in God, which, while the noblest energies of the mind are engaged in investigating the wonders of divine love, can repose in humble simplicity on the care and love of a heavenly Father."

"Again, this faith and trust in God, in which our beloved pastor found such peace and such constant support, was ever accompanied by obedience. He knew that it was folly, and worse than folly, to say that we trust in God to make all things work together for good,

while by neglect of or disobedience to God's commands we do all we can to counteract his holy will. If he trusted in God to make him happy, he knew that he must do all that God required of him. Thus every part of his conduct was regulated by fixed principles. His first and his last inquiry, under all circumstances, was, What is duty? What is right? — Never, What is expedient? What will be thought of this or that course? These latter questions he never asked, except when their consideration was involved in deciding upon duty. The question of duty once settled, his course was settled; and being conscious of having faithfully used the best lights which he could obtain to discover his duty, let events occur as they would, he suffered no vain regrets to harass his mind. He did what he thought was for the best, and then left the result with God."

"To have at all times a distinct and fixed purpose — never to act from mere impulse, or to leave himself to the dictate of momentary feeling — was always the endeavour of him whom we mourn. The day before he died, some one said to him, 'You have always tried to make those around you happy; you would never give anyone pain.' 'So far as I have had *distinct purposes* it may have been so,' he replied."

"There was nothing more strongly marked in our beloved teacher than his openness, and firm, independent honesty of character, his utter abhorrence of falsehood and duplicity. Who has not seen his clear eye flash, and his countenance curl with scorn and detestation, when pointing out the shiftings of hypocrisy, or unveiling the hollow-hearted pretender? If ever there seemed a failure in the charity of his heart, it was when he saw an attempt to deceive, or a course pursued for mere exhibition or effect. Falsehood in any shape, he could not, he would not, endure. He would never veil it by a soft name. A lie he would call a lie, and as such he would treat it, in all its forms and disguises; and if anything human would make the heart of the deceiver quail, it was such a look as I have sometimes seen dart from his usually mild and benevolent face."

"To tell you that our pastor made it the business of his life to do good, that this was the great purpose for which he spoke and acted and laboured, would be only to say that he was a faithful minister and a true follower of his Master and yours. Are there not many of you who remember now, as you look back upon your occasional intercourse with him, how almost everything which you heard him speak had some good meaning in it, something which you could think of afterwards with profit? When he has accidentally met you, and with easy yet dignified familiarity has asked you about your schools, your studies, and your amusements, was there not always some little hint, some good-natured remark, which would convey, almost without your knowing it, a good thought into your mind? which, without the formality of advice, would make you think more of your duty, of the goodness of God, of the blessings which you enjoy? Young as you are, you could hardly help noticing this peculiar and happy faculty in your minister; and we, who knew him longer and better, can remember that it was his way with all; and yet no one ever had less than he the character of the prosing monitor, whose approach we rather avoid than invite. He had a purpose of usefulness in everything. Ever upon the watch, he acquired a most unusual quickness and tact in seizing the right moment and the right way of effecting his purpose."

"I should delight to go on thus, talking to you of our pastor's character. In all its parts the contemplation of it must be profitable and edifying to young and old. I should delight to say more to you of that humble and unreserved trust in God which sustained him under sufferings such as few have experienced, of his submissive acquiescence in the whole will of his heavenly Father, and of the cheerful fortitude which never left him even in the hour of death. In the early stages of the disease which first attacked him, when expressing my anxiety at his acute bodily sufferings, he would speak of *them* almost with contempt; but when he thought of the peculiar nature of the disease in its influences upon the mental energies, of its power to benumb and retard those exercises of the mind in which his joy and his usefulness consisted, then it was that his fortitude was called to its severest test. 'Bodily pain,' he would say, 'is nothing; it is not worthy of a thought, if there be but a free use of the powers of the mind; while these are left untouched, we can bear all which God sends us; and still, if these are affected, we shall not be forsaken.' When travelling with him in a more recent stage of his illness, he once spoke freely upon the prospect before him. 'I think,' said he, 'that a few months, at most, must settle all questions. I have no fear of the result. I dread not death, — but to look forward to years of uselessness — to being a burthen instead of being a helper to others — this, I will confess, is terrible to me. But I have no fears that God will forsake me.' Since his entire confinement to his chamber he has more than once repeated this to me, 'I have never felt myself forsaken for a moment, and I have no fear but that I shall be supported to the end.'

"It is but a few short weeks since I had a brief but most cheerful conversation with him upon his prospects after his change was passed. He spoke of his 'friends in heaven' as familiarly as of those in another city, and told me I should smile if I knew whom he most often thought of meeting. I told him I supposed he thought of many who would there be his familiar companions, whom I could only hope to see as they passed by far above me. 'Some,' said he, 'will have gotten far ahead of us all, but we shall be within the influence of and receive happiness from the highest of all.' A few nights before his death I said to him, 'Your cup of affliction seems deeply drugged; and as God chasteneth whom he loveth, may you not feel that you have great proof of his love; or, at least, that he sees that your faith will bear great trials?' 'We should be careful not to look upon any temporal circumstances,' he replied, 'as in themselves marks of God's anger or approbation. We may look upon the temper with which we meet these circumstances as evidences of our Christian state.' I told him it had been said that perhaps he was suffering for our benefit, that we might see the power of Christian principles set forth in him, and that thus he was adding to the amount of good which he had already done in the world. His tone in reply seemed to reprove me for even this slight allusion to his virtues and his usefulness — for no man ever shrank from praise as he did. 'Whatever good I have done,' said he, 'let God have the praise.' I added, 'You will let him have your gratitude also, that he has made you the instrument of so much good.' 'I wish not,' he said, 'to depreciate the good that I may have done, or to pretend ignorance of it. But of my own deficiencies I am more sensible than any other person can be. And this I know, that if I attain heaven, it will not be because

I have earned it. Eternal life is the *gift* of God, and,' added he after a pause, 'it will be given to those who have formed and cherished a taste for its joys. That I may have acquired some relish for its felicities affords me consolation and hope.' On parting with him I expressed the hope that he might have a quiet night. 'I shall have such a night as God sends,' was his calm reply.

"Such were the occasional expressions of a mind full of resignation, humility, and faith. He never loved to talk of himself, — and death-bed gossip was his abhorrence. Whatever he said came so in the natural course of remark, that it is only by retracing general conversations that anything of the kind can be recalled. There was, to the last hour of his life, a calm dignity, a naturalness, and a self-possession, to which I recur with increasing astonishment.

"How full his heart was of love towards others, how much more he ever thought of them than of himself, the youngest of you, who knew him with any intimacy, must have seen and felt. How engrossing to his thoughts and affections were the welfare and improvement of the people of his charge we all know. The pains and debility of sickness, so far from excluding these subjects from his mind, seemed chiefly felt inasmuch as they debarred him from ministering to the service of his beloved flock. Only a few evenings before his death he sent for me expressly to mention a kindness which he had for some time wished to perform for one of his society, but to which, finding death was about to prevent his ever performing it, he wished me to attend. This was done when speaking was almost agony to him.

"But why do I go on thus? I must restrain myself, or I shall defeat my chief object, which was to impress deeply upon your thought a few points in the character of him whom we lament, which you, as well as others, are capable of imitating. His whole character is the rich legacy which he has left us; and, profuse as were his efforts to do us good while he was with us, if we faithfully use this bequest, we shall find it a treasure exhaustible only with the mine from which he drew all its riches."

"Are we ready to exclaim, 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth'? — Let us not forget that there is indeed help with God. Let no desponding thoughts find place in our minds for ourselves, for society, or for the church. Remember how he said, while he was yet with us, — how often he said it, when clouds of gloom seemed to overhang every prospect, — 'God loves his own cause better than we can love it, and he will never forsake it.'"

After these specimens, we believe our readers will agree with us in the opinion that the writer of this Address could hardly perform a more acceptable service to the church than to give an extended biography of Dr. Parker, a work for which, we repeat it, we are sure no one can be better qualified in all essential respects. We hope very soon to learn that the work is undertaken.

G. Nichols.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

A LETTER ON THE COLDNESS OF NEW-ENGLAND PREACHING.

Messrs. Editors,

Were it not that I have appeared as a contributor in your periodical, I would tell you that I like it much and believe that it will do great good. What I like in your plan is, that you propose to speak a plain and direct language to *the people*. The people have too often been overlooked, or courted only for base purposes. Preachers and writers too frequently address themselves only to the few, and glad am I that you propose to speak for and to the many.

I wish you would undeceive the public on a point of some consequence to us New-Englanders. You know we are called a cold, unfeeling people. When we complain of the style of sermonizing usually adopted by our clergy, and ask why it is not as bold, glowing, breathing, impassioned as that of the south and west, we are told, our cold northern manner forbids it. Now I do not believe a word of this. I know the New-England character; I know the New-England climate is cold; I know the wind that comes over her bleak hills and granite mountains is cold; I know that the exterior of her sons and daughters is cold; but she has a soul of fire. No part of our country presents a population more susceptible, not of a crackling fanaticism, but of a deep and burning enthusiasm. Nowhere else will you find that restlessness, that eternal desire to grasp something which they have not — that sure indication of the soul's thirst for perfection — in a greater degree than in New England, cold, calculating, mercenary as she has been called.

Where live the American poets? where the most popular and thrillingly eloquent of American prose-writers? I answer not; but whoever does answer will refute the false impression gone abroad against New England. Where, again, were born those eloquent men of the west? Who were their parents? What is the west, but a child of New England? Do you ask why the child surpasses the mother? I answer, simply because the mother is the slave of etiquette, while the child indulges freely all the promptings of the soul, — now following its grave, now its frolicsome, humour; laughing when pleased, crying when grieved; and often passing from the laughing to the crying, and from the crying to the laughing, so rapidly, that smiles and tears are frequently mingled. Let the mother break the fetters which restrain the motions of her soul, and she will yet prove herself worthy of her child.

The great fault of our northern eloquence is not chargeable to the people, but to our orators. I thought when I came into New England that the people were incapable of feeling the power of eloquence. It was one of my hasty thoughts, drawn from the first appearance. No people can feel genuine eloquence better than New Englanders. Go where you will, the churches demand it. The great complaint against our clergy, a complaint almost universal, — not among strangers, but among ourselves, — is, that our clergy want life, want earnestness, want boldness and directness. I hear this everywhere. The people are hungering and thirsting for a more efficient ministry; they are dying for the want of that warm, bold, energetic manner which it is said our northern manner forbids.

Am I wrong? Have our clergy tried the experiment? Have they

been too eloquent, too pungent in their appeals to conscience, too direct in their applications of the threatenings of the Divine law, too consoling in speaking of the promises of the gospel? Have they been too impassioned, too forgetful of self, and of everything but the subject they would bring home to men's minds and hearts? If they have, if they have gone so far as to be called extravagant, then I withdraw my complaint.

To me there is something almost criminal in this coldness in the pulpit. What is the minister's duty? What does he see? A world lying in wickedness, death raging, friends and brothers dying, dying in sin, while he holds in his hand the remedy, that which saves from sin and imparts a life which is forever. He sees the sinner on the brink of the precipice, now raising his foot for the step which dashes him to pieces. Can he wait to cull the words in which to admonish him of his danger? stop to round the period in which to tell him to "Hold! another step is death"? No; he cannot, if he sees the danger. He who sees the awful condition of the sinner, who feels the magnitude of the evil of sin, cannot stop to select his words, to round and polish his periods, and cull the flowers of elocution, which will fade ere a soul can feel their beauty. No, he will speak right on. He will pour out his whole soul, in a stream of strong, rushing, overwhelming eloquence. He will see nothing but the sinner and his peril, the sinner and his means of safety; he will not, when he sees the sinner writhing with agonies of remorse, or ready to be enveloped in the flames of that fire which shall not be quenched, stop to correct his syntax, and to model his pronunciation after the latest approved standard. No; he will call mightily upon God to help; he will call upon the sinner; he will bid him flee from danger; to run, and to run for his life to the city of refuge, in tones that shall thrill through the soul and sink deep into the heart. We want ministers who see and feel, and will speak in this manner. The state of the world demands a ministry that can forget everything but Christ and him crucified. Let us have such a ministry. Let it speak loudly and earnestly, in strong, nervous, bold, glowing, burning language; and cold as is our northern manner, we will put up with it, and thank God for it.—Forgive me these hasty remarks and believe me yours truly,

O. A. Brownson.

THE WEST AS A FIELD OF USEFULNESS FOR YOUNG PREACHERS OF THE UNITARIAN DENOMINATION.

A Letter to the Editors, dated Louisville, Jan. 7th, 1834.

I wish to say a few words, through your work, to those young men of my own profession whose thoughts have been directed to the west as a sphere for their ministerial labours. Before I came out here myself I heard the most contradictory opinions in regard to the expediency of this step. Some thought the west the Garden of Eden; by others it was likened to the Desert of Sahara. One declared that rational and liberal Christianity *must* and *would* spread through this region as the autumnal flames flash along its prairies. Another answered that the grossest fanaticism and most intolerant bigotry were the characteristics of western religion. To reconcile such statements was impossible; one could only balance them, and try to keep an unprejudiced mind, and think nothing beforehand about it. Such was my aim; and I wish now to throw in my opinion among the rest, formed on the experience of the last five months.

Is it advisable for a young man of liberal views to go out to the west as a preacher?

It is not, and it is.

1. It is not if he delights in large audiences. Rational Christianity does not collect large audiences in the west. It is enthusiasm, exaggeration, extreme statements, vivid colouring, glow and passion, which collect crowds. To be sure, if a man happens to be an orator, as has been the case with some of our preachers who have visited these parts, he will be sure to gain admiration; for in no part of the United States is there to be found a stronger love, or indeed a finer and more correct taste for oratory, than in the west, — in particular, Kentucky. But suppose the friend for whom I write to be no orator, but a sincere man, of average abilities, who desires to preach his Master rather than himself. In this case he can console himself with the distich of the poet,

> "Let the fanatic gather disciples like sand on the sea-shore;
> Sand is but sand, but thou art a pearl, thou my *rational friend*."

Rational Christianity certainly shows no intention of flying over the west like wildfire. I fear that, like most other truths, our views must be propagated by our own efforts. "Such labour has God appointed for men."

2. So let no young man come to the west who is afraid to work. In order to produce the least effect on the minds of this rather volatile and changeable race, he must task himself night and day, in every manner, to advance his cause and finish his work. To be obliged to do this, to be necessitated to lay aside habits of sloth and assume those of industry, is, as wise men look on it, an advantage.

3. Lastly, the west is no place for a man whose tastes are unchangeably fixed, and whose habits of feeling and acting are rigidly cast and hardened, and who cannot open his mind to new impressions, or bear up in the lack of the accustomed comforts and loved objects of home. Western manners, customs, feelings are different from eastern, yet in their way they are good, and will strike an unprejudiced mind as such, if it can bear the first shock of novelty. But if a young man can renounce present success, can work, and can forget home, the west is just the country where he will be happy, useful, and improving.

1. For in the first place, he will be pleased with the society by which he is surrounded. He will miss, perhaps, much of the culture and depth of acquirement of the east; but in their place he will find openness and liberality of mind, as great extent of information, and a very active, inquiring, and improving spirit. He will miss that love and patronage of established institutions which he left behind, but will find their place supplied by greater energy of individual character. He will be surprised to find how much is said, done, and thought, in a single day, by western people; how much change and enterprise and activity surround him. He will probably gain more knowledge of mankind in a month here, than in a year in New England. He will be pleased with finding hospitality, liberality, and frankness of manners, in the place of the exclusiveness and envy and rigour of *caste* which pervade New-England society. Here they act wholly or almost wholly on the principle,

> "The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
> The *man*'s the gowd, for a' that."

2. He will have the pleasure, therefore, of finding himself improving. He will gain a self-confidence founded on self-knowledge. For he will freely act himself out, regardless of the expectations and demands of others. In New England he could hardly avoid saying — I am expected to speak thus and so, to do this and that. Here nothing in particular is expected; there are no fixed tastes and opinions, and settled, regular demands, to fetter the activity of the individual. It is only expected that he will do something, what and how are left to himself. No set of opinions or tastes has become dominant; all are militant. This, then, seems just the state of society where a young man can best put that important finishing-part to his education which consists in practising self-dependence. "In New England," a friend once remarked to me, "we are like stones wedged

in an arch; at the west each one stands like a tree, supported by nothing but its own roots." The remark is very true.

3. Thirdly, the opportunity of useful action in our profession and the prospect of future usefulness are ten times as great here as at the east. There all things are fixed; here they are fixing; an influence exerted now will be felt in the future institutions of this country. Here, too, everything is advancing with gigantic strides, and everyone who will persevere with a determined spirit will take his share of the growth of the country.

I must here insist on the duty, as I think it, of our body to establish churches *now* in the principal western cities. There are Unitarians everywhere, but not enough anywhere to build a church and support a preacher without assistance. Six hundred dollars paid by the Association or other Unitarians to support a preacher one year in St. Louis would certainly establish a church there. Why will they not do this? Let them try this as an experiment, and, if it succeed, proceed to some of the other cities. The objection which is urged against such measures at the east does not apply here. No old church is to be broken up; those who will attend our church would go nowhere else. There are two millions of persons in this valley who belong to no church; can money be employed better than in providing for them? How little this is, compared with what is laid out by other denominations! What I now propose is, in the opinion of all our friends here, a measure demanded by the times. They go so far as to say, "Let the Association expend all the money collected for the salary of their agent, in sending agents *now* over this country, and it will be returned to them tenfold by the new Auxiliaries which they will establish all through the Union." I am disposed to think with them.

I must finish with a single word respecting the opposition we meet with. It is *great*, undoubtedly, here as elsewhere, but I think less intolerant than at the east. I think that one who should seek distinction here in Mr. Cheever's fashion, by arrogant attacks on the good and wise, would receive the contempt of all parties. Wishing you success in your enterprise, I remain yours,

JAMES F. CLARKE.

Extracts from a Letter dated Richmond, Jan. 6th, 1834.

As to our society, it is, I am happy to inform you, in a very healthy and flourishing condition. Prejudice is every day giving way, a better feeling begins to be manifested towards us, the ladies venture to attend in respectable numbers, and the church is, in general, well attended both in regard to numbers and respectability. I have now a very extended acquaintance through the state. A highly respectable body of the members of the House of Delegates are my regular hearers and most hearty friends.

You inquire respecting Charlottesville. I hear from our friends there often, and have received many pressing solicitations to visit that place, Lynchburgh, and several other important places in the state. But my time is wholly taken up with my society. I might greatly advance my personal interests by leaving Virginia. But I do not feel satisfied to do so. It presents a broad field for usefulness, though but a poor one for pecuniary recompense. I wish that some preacher could come here from among our northern brethren. Charlottesville would be a grand station. I fear it would be difficult to furnish sufficient inducements to command the talents required; for an ordinary preacher would not meet the wants and intelligence of that polished community.

Your prospectus was received several days since. I am well pleased that you have undertaken a work so much needed, especially in this quarter, and nothing that I can do, to promote its circulation, shall be want-

ing. We have had serious thoughts of establishing a press in this city. A gentleman every way competent to the task of superintending it can be procured, and my friends would contribute liberally to the establishment of an office. From my success in the short excursions and slight efforts I have hitherto made to procure support for *The Pioneer*, I am well satisfied that I might obtain fifteen hundred subscribers by travelling and preaching a few months in the warm season. But my society must not be left without preaching; and, under all considerations, we have pretty much concluded to abandon the scheme. Your paper may have an ample support in this quarter alone, if you can employ some one to make a business of getting subscribers for it. I would, with all my heart, extend it widely, if my hands were not so completely tied by the constant demand made upon my time by my rapidly increasing congregation.

J. B. PITKIN.

Extract from a Letter from Worcester County, Massachusetts, dated H——, January 29, 1834.

Everything goes on prosperously with us, and our prospects are certainly *promising*. A number of families have lately left the Calvinistic meeting and come to ours; they have already signified their intention of joining our society in the spring. Ten were added to our church on the first Sabbath in this month, and it is expected a number more will offer themselves soon. My people manifest an increasing attention to religion, and we have what I consider a *real* revival of pure and *undefiled* religion, although we have no "inquiry," no "anxious," no "whispering" meetings, nor yet any "concerts of prayer," to pray down other sects or heretical seminaries.

The Calvinists in this place held a "four days' meeting" last fall, which, I think, was much more beneficial to us than to them. The Sunday before it commenced, I preached an extemporary sermon to my people from the text, "Let them alone," and my people took the hint, and governed themselves accordingly. To that sermon the Calvinists attribute a great share of their failure! Can it be possible that a feeble worm, and "*damnable heretic*" too, can prevent the ALMIGHTY from reviving his work whenever he pleases!!

At the close of the meeting, as I am informed, Mr. G. (whether provoked with *me* or with the *people*, or with the *Lord*, I cannot say) arose and said, "All who are determined to go to hell are desired to withdraw; those who wish to follow the Saviour, to remain for religious instruction." People, as you may suppose, were so disgusted, that nearly all left immediately.

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE.

A friend in Philadelphia, in a letter dated *Jan.* 30, writes:

"I have heard repeatedly that a liberal society might be formed at Wilmington, Delaware. There are many Hicksites there."

LECTURES ON THE EVIDENCES AND ON UNITARIANISM.

At the request of the Young Men's Society, a course of Sunday-evening lectures on the evidences of natural and revealed religion is being delivered in Boston by clergymen of different denominations. Three have already been preached, which are said to have been very able and conclusive, and attracted very large audiences. The public interest in

these subjects is daily increasing. We understand that a similar course is about to be delivered in Salem, and we presume that the example will soon be followed in other places. The Rev. Mr. Whitman, of Waltham, is giving a series of extemporary lectures on infidelity, in his own town, which we hope will be repeated elsewhere.

These lectures, we think, will be eminently useful, — not so much on account of the convincing arguments for the truth of our religion which they present, since little more than general impressions can be made by public discourses, — but because they tend to excite the public mind to a more careful examination of its evidences. They will teach the skeptical that Christianity is not so utterly destitute of proof but that there may be something in it, and that its foundations cannot be shaken by the crude objections and unfounded assertions which are afloat in the community. We had some further remarks to make in this connection, but our limits will not permit.

Believing the diffusion of better views of theology than have heretofore prevailed to be one of the most powerful antidotes to infidelity, we are glad to learn that public lectures on the great points of Unitarianism are being delivered in several places. The Rev. E. S. Gannett has been preaching doctrinal discourses for some time past in Boston to large audiences, and Dr. Nichols, of Portland, Maine, has been delivering lectures on the same topics for the last two or three months in his own church, which have been well attended by persons of all denominations, and have produced some very gratifying results, especially in enlightening the public mind on the true character of Unitarianism. J. Q. D.

THE AGENCY OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

We have the satisfaction of announcing that the Rev. Jason Whitman of Saco, Maine — one of the editors of this work — has been appointed Agent of the American Unitarian Association, and will accept the appointment. He enters upon the duties of the office immediately.

We look upon the establishment of this agency as being decidedly the most important step which has been taken by the A. U. A., on account of the results which may be expected from it. The periodical visits of the Agent to all our churches, in all parts of the United States, cannot fail, we think, to draw more closely the bonds which unite them, and to awaken in them a more hearty interest both in one another and in their common object. The cause of Christ has suffered incalculably among us for the want of such an agency. We thank God, from our hearts, that this want is now to be supplied; and that measures, which promise to be in some sort efficient, are now to be taken, for sending the gospel in something of its truth and purity and sanctifying power through our land. May God bless his work! G. N.

A Correspondent in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, proposes the following

QUERIES:

1. To what *coming* did our Lord refer in Matthew xvi. 27, 28? Do these verses refer to one or two appearances of Christ?

2. Upon what principle do Christian ministers *now* pray for the holy spirit? The querist has been accustomed to consider this expression, wherever it occurs in the New Testament, as having a reference to some extraordinary or miraculous gift.

INSTALLATION. — January 1st, Rev. A. D. Jones was installed as pastor of the Congregational Church and Society in Wilton, N. H. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Gage of Nashua, N. H. Text, 2 Peter, i. 17. "For he received from God, the Father, honour and glory."